



INL started using social media in 2008 and has attracted thousands of users since that time.

## INL's evolving social network

by [Rebecca Jones](#), *INL Communications & Governmental Affairs*

Hitting 100,000 views on YouTube isn't an earth-shattering event. You won't see it featured on the Today show. You won't read CNN articles about how it's changing the way people view the Internet. However, for Idaho National Laboratory, hitting the 100,000 upload milestone earlier this month is one sign that when it comes to sharing stories of the work performed at the lab, the times they are a-changin'.

Though many still view YouTube as a repository for grainy home videos of dogs riding skateboards, its significance on the Web is no laughing matter. Once considered a simple video repository, data shows that YouTube is now considered the second most popular search engine on the Internet — falling only behind Google and surpassing searches made on Yahoo.

"We started our social media campaign with a [YouTube channel](#), and we're excited to see it reaching this kind of milestone," said Amy Lientz, INL Communications and Governmental Affairs director. "As we watch YouTube and social media in general become a more significant part of the way people use the Internet, our social media campaign becomes a more relevant piece of our communications strategy."



*INL has approximately 100 energy, education and news videos on the lab's [YouTube channel](#).*



*INL's [facebook channel](#) allows the public to interact with staff about industry news, lab research and career information.*

The lab's presence on YouTube is just one facet of a social media campaign designed to tell the INL story to the world. The lab now uses YouTube, Flickr, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to regularly share updates on the lab's research, mission and community outreach with a larger audience. Users dedicated to following INL's social media channels include more than 3,000 people on Facebook and 1,400 on Twitter.

YouTube allows the lab to feature videos that range from what it's like to work at the lab to in-depth reviews of technologies to televised interviews featuring INL leadership. But in a world where social media allows you to easily learn what a friend in a different state is having for lunch, buying at the grocery store or thinking about at any moment (whether you were interested or not), INL has used different platforms to quickly and easily share a variety of information with the appropriate tools.

"We can now share high-resolution images with the media and general public on our [Flickr account](#)," said Tom Fields, INL Web content editor. "We can provide links to significant news articles that relate to our work or the nuclear and clean energy industry in general on Twitter. We can ask our Facebook fans what they think of changes in the nuclear energy industry. The focus is less centered on pushing a message out and hoping it gets to the right audience and more on engaging in a discussion with those who are interested in the lab."

As the country's lead nuclear research laboratory, INL has always striven to share its expertise and stories with the public. But using the Web tools that people already regularly access expands the reach of these messages one click, uploaded view and "like" at a time.



*INL's [flickr channel](#) has hundreds of high resolution science images that can be downloaded by the public.*

[Feature Archive](#)